

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

OCTOBER 24, 2003

United States Army
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Regulatory Branch
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

(504) 862-1581
Project Manager
John Herman
Permit Application Number
CY-20-040-0014

State of Louisiana
Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Services
Post Office Box 4313
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-4313

(225) 219-3024
Project Manager
Tessa Roy
WQC Application Number
WQC TR-031001-06

Interested parties are hereby notified that a permit application has been received by the New Orleans District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to: [X] Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (30 Stat. 1151; 33 USC 403); and/or [X] Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (86 Stat. 816; 33 USC 1344).

Application has also been made to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Water Resources, for a Water Quality Certification (WQC) in accordance with statutory authority contained in Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, Title 30, Chapter 11, Part IV, Section 2074 A(3), and provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (P.L. 95-217).

NORTH LAKE MECHANT LANDBRIDGE RESTORATION PROJECT IN TERREBONNE PARISH

NAME OF APPLICANT: U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE, c/o Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Restoration Division, Attn: T. Mitchell Andrus, Post Office Box 44027, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-4027.

LOCATION OF WORK: In Lake Mechant and shorelines along Raccourci Bay and Lake Pagie, T20S-R14E and T20S-15E, approximately 17.5 miles southwest of Theriot, Louisiana, in TERREBONNE PARISH, as shown on the enclosed drawings.

CHARACTER OF WORK: The applicant has requested Department of the Army authorization to protect and restore the North Lake Mechant land-bridge and the Small Bayou LaPointe Ridge by creating marsh to fortify the area north of Lake Mechant (CWPPRA Project No. TE-44). The proposed project will consist of replacing an existing fixed crest weir, armoring an existing plug, installing two earthen plugs, three sheetpile plugs, two rock plugs, and constructing a series of earthen containment dikes totaling 55,000 linear feet and rock dikes totaling 5,737 linear feet, all at various locations. The containment dikes will be constructed in open water areas adjacent to fill areas. Approximately 8,644,000 cubic yards (based on a 2.5:1 dredge volume) of material will be hydraulically dredged from northern Lake Mechant. The actual fill amount, after consolidation and de-watering, will result in approximately 3,458,000 cubic yards of material being deposited in eleven different locations (mostly open water and existing broken marsh areas) to create approximately 553 acres of emergent marsh and to provide nourishment for another 211 acres of existing marsh, and approximately 232,000 cubic yards will be used in construction of earthen containment dikes. In addition, approximately 26,323 cubic yards of rock will be utilized in construction of dikes. Access flotation channels of 40 feet wide and construction channels of 80 feet wide will be dredged to reach the construction site. Material dredged from the construction of the access channels will be temporarily stockpiled adjacent to the channel and will encompass approximately 20.6 acres. This

material will be returned back to the channel prior to demobilization. Approximately 32.9 acres of earthen dikes will be created in shallow open water area by bucket dredging along the boundaries of the marsh creation areas. Approximately 2.6 acres of earthen dike will be created in shallow open water by beneficially using bucket dredged material from the access channels along the eastern boundary of Raccourci Bay to reinforce the shoreline. Approximately 2.0 acres of rock dike will be created for shoreline protection. Approximately 0.8 acre of existing canal will be filled using rock and earthen plugs. It is estimated that less than 1.0 acre of marsh will be impacted as a result of project implementation. The proposed project has a 20 year project life.

The comment period for the Department of the Army Permit and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality WQC will close **30 days** from the date of this joint public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposed work, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having interest in this permit and/or this WQC request and must be mailed so as to be received before or by the last day of the comment period. Letters concerning the Corps of Engineers permit application must reference the applicant's name and the Permit Application Number, and be mailed to the Corps of Engineers at the address above, **ATTENTION: REGULATORY BRANCH**. Similar letters concerning the Water Quality Certification must reference the applicant's name and the WQC Application number and be mailed to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality at the address above.

The application for this proposed project is on file with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and may be examined during weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Copies may be obtained upon payment of costs of reproduction.

Corps of Engineers Permit Criteria

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether to make, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an

Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

No properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are near the proposed work. The possibility exists that the proposed work may damage or destroy presently unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, historical sites, or data. Copies of this notice are being sent to the State Archeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Our initial finding is that the proposed work would neither affect any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Departments of Interior or Commerce, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any endangered species.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposal would result in the destruction or alteration of approximately 804 acres of EFH utilized by various life stages of red drum and penaeid shrimp. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

If the proposed work involves deposits of dredged or fill material into navigable waters, the evaluation of the probable impacts will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also, a certification that the proposed activity will not violate applicable water quality standards will be required from the Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, before a permit is issued.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

The applicant has certified that the proposed activity described in the application complies with and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program. The Department of the Army permit will not be issued unless the applicant received approval or a waiver of the Coastal Use Permit by the Department of Natural Resources.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties whom you deem likely to have interest in the matter.

Martin S. Mayer
Chief, Central Evaluation Section
Regulatory Branch

Enclosures